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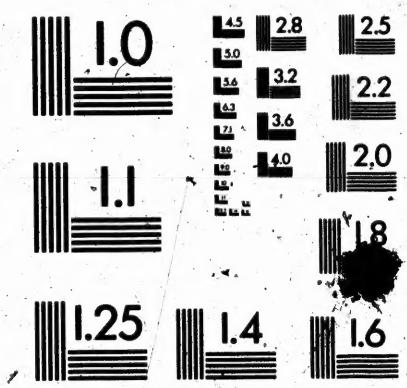

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Review of a Sermon

Preached by Dr. Strachan

A REVIEW

OF A SERMON, PREACHED BY THE HON. AND REVEREND JOHN STRACHAN, D. D. AT YORK, U. C. JULY 3, 1825, ON THE DEATH OF THE LATE LORD BISHOP OF QUEBEC.

BY A METHODIST PREACHER.

[*The Editor of the Colonial Advocate, (from which Paper this Review is copied,) observes; "Greek words occur in the Manuscript of this Review, but as we have no Greek Characters they are left out, with a dash substituted thus———. Had the writer been at hand we would have advised with him, as we know nothing of Greek ourselves."*]

The diffusion of christianity is the most important subject that can engage the attention of men. In its origin, nature and effects, it may be justly said to be divine. While its doctrines, principles and precepts, have been revealed from Heaven by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, and by them disseminated through different parts of the world, they afford a powerful inducement, and an admirable pattern for imitation to their sincere followers in all ages of the world, and in every situation of life.

Who that considers, that it is the object and tendency of the religion which they propagated and established, to deliver the earth from her sorrows, to be our comfort in affliction, our joy in health, our hope in death, and our inestimable possession in eternity, but must feel an anxiety "to enlist among that disinterested band, who fight not for human ambition, or human praise, but for the honor of their Saviour and the salvation of men."

But while we are roused to this holy warfare by the examples of these illustrious heroes of christianity, and are encouraged with the sublime prospects which her promulgation presents, and the invaluable blessings which her achievements will bring to the fallen race, we consider it equally important, never to degrade her native dignity and worth, nor make her the author of those corruptions which she forbids and condemns.

When we see the heavenly affections which she infuses into the minds of men represented as nothing more than an attachment to a particular constitution or establishment, and those bonds of charity by which she embraces *all* mankind described as the principle which only unites colonies to their "Parent State," to the unchristianization of all other kingdoms who bow not to this political shrine; when we see the balm of her consolations, which the beds of affliction require to unite the distressed to their God, and to prepare them to meet him in peace, perverted to the sordid purpose of extending the influence of a favorite church: but above all, when we see that which is converted into a vehicle of preferment, a political tool, exhibited as "a bright emanation from Heaven, the Church of Christ, founded by Jesus Christ, & his Apostles," we are sensible that the religion of the meek Saviour is made to bleed by a wound more fatal, than those which are inflicted by the vantage of infidelity. She is attacked by the most dangerous of all enemies, one who lurks within her bosom, shelters himself under her canopy, and feeds upon her benevolence.

He who is fervently attached to the

Lord Jesus Christ and his interests, must feel himself compelled to contribute his efforts, however feeble they may be, to expose sentiments, which are so degrading to the character of Jesus and his Apostles, and so destructive to the true interests of his holy religion. And, as a dissenter, he must now think it high time to defend himself and his brethren from that calumny with which the Doctor's discourses and writings have, for so many years, been replete.

As to the christian religion it is possible for us to err in two respects; with regard to her nature, and the means to be used for the dissemination of her principles. Either of these, most necessarily defeat the object which she purposes.—Into both of these errors, the Doctor seems to have unhappily fallen in the elaborate discourse before us.

He assumes axioms which are far from being self evident; and lays down principles which can hardly be supported — prescribes means which never have been and never will be effectual, in accomplishing the victories of the Redeemer; and he throws out slander, which better comports with the character of a passionate lawyer, pleading a hard cause, than it does with the character of a professed christian, or minister of the gospel.

Whatever remarks the Doctor's discourse may require me to make, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I mean no reflection on the doctrines, liturgy, or discipline of the church of which he has the honour to be a minister. Be assured I mean no such thing. I firmly believe in her doctrines, I admire her liturgy, and I heartily rejoice in the success of those principles which are therein contained. And it is for the prosperity of the truths which they unfold, that I shall ever pray and contend. And with respect to church government, I heartily adopt the sentiments of the pious and learned Bishop Burnet that "that form of church government is best which is most suitable to the customs and circumstances of the people among whom it is established. If I am at any time led to animadvert on the conduct of the Clergy of the church of England, my strictures are not intended to be generally applied. Even in Canada there are very worthy exceptions, whose names I would take particular pleasure in mentioning were it not a step beyond the bounds of delicacy. Wherever he is, and in whatever church he is,

"I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine, and whose life,
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in a sacred cause.
To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
In conversation frivolous, in dress
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse;
Frequent in park with lady at his side,
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes;
But rare at home, and never at his books,
Or with a pen, save when he scrawls a card;
Constant at routes, familiar with a round
Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor;
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well prepared by ignorance and sloth,
By indolency and love of world,
To make God's work a sinecure; a slave
To his own pleasures and his patron's pride;
From such Apostles, O ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church! And lay not careless hands
On skulls that cannot teach and will not learn."

But I am far from paying that servile homage to the disputed documents of history as to acknowledge the unbroken succession of Episcopal authority from the Apostles to the present day; nor do I think that presumption can be supported consistently with the principles of the Church of England. I feel myself quite deficient in sagacity of perception, or that wonderful power of association for which the Doctor is so eminent as to discern the resemblance between the congregations of the Church of England in Canada, and the assemblies of ancient christians; neither am I able to learn in what part of the New Testament the Doctor finds Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, Rectors, Deacons, Plenipotentiaries, Vicars, Readers, Clerks, &c. with which the Church of England is so abundantly fortified.

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Were I to judge according to outward appearance, I should feel a trembling awe; in drawing near to this impregnable Castle of the State, so "venerable" in every department; but feeling myself at liberty to judge righteous judgment, I approach it without dread, nor do I feel myself obligated to take my shoes from off my feet.

The Doctor, when describing the present Church of England, with her various offices and superb appendages, feels confident that he is exhibiting to us a truly apostolic Church. He says, (speaking of the Church of England) "her government justly claims a divine origin, 'sanctioned by the *authority* and *practice* of the apostles, which is the law of Christ,'" (p. 13;) and, having spoken most pompously of her teachers, litergy, discipline, and unity, he says, "such she was seen by those who proclaimed her in the midst of the flames, such she has remained for many centuries, and such his Lordship presented her to these provinces, pure and spotless as her faith."

What "origin" the Doctor calls "divine" I am not able to determine; for I find but little in the commonly received scriptures which contain the divinity laid down in the above cited passages.—The apostles, it seems, had not sufficient discernment to fortify the "towers of their Zion" with the modern "Defender of the Faith," or that "watchful shepherd, whose voice will rouse the inferior clergy, if slothful, and punish them, if negligent." And if we compare the present state and conduct of a great part of the Church of England, and of many of her clergy, we will have but little cause to wish the continuance of this relationship, either with the "Defender," or the "Shepherd."

That the three orders of Church officers in the Church of England are not apostolic, is undeniable from these plain accounts which are given us in the New Testament of the ancient churches.—However different our ideas may be which we are accustomed to attach to the terms Bishop and Presbyter, or Elder, it is certain that they were promiscuously used in the scriptures for names of the same officers. This is obvious from the exhortation which St. Peter gives to the Jewish christians. "The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the *oversight* (——, or governing as Bishops) not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock." (1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 3.) Here they were commanded not only to feed the flock of God, but to govern it with episcopal authority; and the apostle, as a church officer, calls himself nothing more than an elder.

In Acts (xx. 17, xxv. 6, 7, 8,) "And from *Miletus*, he (St. Paul) sent to Ephesus, and called the elders (——, or presbyters) of the church. And when they had come together unto him, he said unto them. And now behold, I know that you among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore, I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over with the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (——, bishops, called in verse 17 ——, elders or presbyters) to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Now at this meeting of the apostle and the elders of the church of Ephesus, Timothy was present, (Acts xx. 4, 5, &c) who, we are often informed, was the fire diocesan bishop of that church. If Timothy was the prelate, or modern diocesan bishop of that church, why did

the apostle, even in the presence of Timothy delegate the whole episcopal authority to the elders or presbyters? Could there ever be a more favourable time than this to teach elders their duty to their diocesan bishop, if there was any? He says that he had "declared unto them the *whole* counsel of God."—How could this be true if he had not taught them subjection to their prelate? The apostle foresaw that ravenous wolves would come and attempt to devour the flock, and if diocesan episcopacy was the only effectual remedy against these approaching evils, as some learned divines very gravely teach, why did the apostle not appoint Timothy, who was then standing by his side, to his office, and give him the proper instructions for the discharge of his important duty? Should it be asked "what was Timothy's duty in that city? (for I readily acknowledge that he was invested with authority to ordain and rebuke presbyters.)—To this I answer that he exercised the office of an evangelist. (2 Tim. iv. 5.) According to Eusebius, (Eccles. Hist. chap. 9.) the work of an evangelist was, "to lay the foundations of the faith in barbarous nations, and to constitute among them pastors; after which he passed into other countries." And this perfectly accords with 1 Cor iv. 17, xvi. 10, 11, Phil. ii. 19.

I might here give the Doctor a little information relative to the introduction of diocesan episcopacy. But upon this I will only remark, that the hearts of very great men, even in ancient days, as well as the present, were not entirely free from the desire of influence and dominion, and therefore the whole mystery is explained in 2 Thess. ii. 7, 1 John ii. 18, 19.

I leave the scriptures for the present, for I perceive the Doctor likes politics much better. But before I follow him into this favourite field in which we are always favoured with his presence, tho' not for the best of purposes, I wish to make one or two enquiries more about the "divine origin" of his "venerable church." He seems to consider the episcopal authority, as it is exercised in the Church of England, unbroken from the apostles. How the Doctor will make this appear, is difficult for me to determine, unless he can prove the ordination of Queen Elizabeth, and the British parliament, (who pronounced legal, eight years after his formal ordination, the ordination of Mr. Parker, the first Church of England Prelate, whom the papal bishops unanimously refused to ordain, and who was ordained by bishops that had been deposed from their offices by Queen Mary) by the "venerable" fathers of the third and fourth centuries; or by claiming it from his Holiness the Pope. But as the Doctor, though possessing a wonderful power of association, will hardly presume so far upon the longevity of the ancient fathers, we think he would prefer the latter source of ecclesiastical authority, which harmonizes better with his complexion, as well as with the history of the times. But even in this happy retreat, the Doctor comes in contact with his own principles. He declares in the book of homilies, (which are recognized in the 35th article of his creed, as containing "a godly and wholesome doctrine") that the Church of Rome is a "Harlot, the most filthy of all harlots, the greatest that ever has been." How is the Doctor to derive a pure, spiritual, and apostolical authority, from the "most filthy of harlots?" If he still maintains this intimate relationship with the "most filthy of harlots," even when she denies his legitimacy, he is welcome to the endearing connexion, I will not attempt to disturb him in his undefiled repose.

The Doctor however, does not lay so much stress on this part. The fire of animation does not appear to kindle till he comes to the chain on which the purse hangs. Then he rises to the sublime. "Indeed" says the Doctor,

"a christian nation without a religious establishment is a contradiction. And notwithstanding the praise worthy exertions of a few denominations in the neighbouring states, more especially the Episcopal Church, christianity, except in a few large towns, is found to languish, and seldom in the country pervades the mass of the population: and let the opponents of ecclesiastical establishments, if any such there be, compare the people who have no standing ministry, (or religious establishment not merely in towns where a spark of christianity may exist, but through the country, with a people who possess this inestimable advantage, and he will acknowledge that no country can be called christian, which does not give public support to christianity, (or an ecclesiastical establishment) and that no other religion but that of Jesus, could have suggested an idea so grand and affecting, as that of placing a public teacher of righteousness in every small society throughout the world."

The Doctor, in other parts of his sermon, as well as in the passage above quoted, endeavours to impress upon his readers, that the "church of Christ," and a "religious establishment" are one. And so confident is he of it, that he roundly asserts, that a religious establishment is essential to every christian nation, and to the diffusion of christianity. Not to notice the profound ignorance of religion and church history, the palpable contradiction to daily experience, and the pitiable bigotry that such representatives display, I observe, that the church of Christ as described in the scriptures, is very distinct and different from such a religious establishment as that to which the Doctor alludes.

By a religious establishment, I understand, "a clergy, as an order of men secluded from other professions to attend upon the offices of religion; (not politicians) a legal provision for the maintenance of the clergy; and the confining of that provision to a *particular* sect of christianity." (Paley.) Such "a legal provision," or I may say, such a union of civil and religious policy, the Doctor seems to consider essential to "a church founded by the authority and practice of the Apostles, which is the wife of Christ." But, in the scriptures, I do not find this notion attached to the "church of Christ."

Saint Cyprian says that "where two or three believers are met together, there is a church." But we will turn to the law and to the testimony.

The first time that St. Paul mentions the term "church" is in his preface to his first epistle to the Corinthians.—"Paul called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ, unto the church of God, which is a Corinth;" the import of which expression, is determined by the following words. "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours." (See 2 Cor. i. 1, Gal. i. 2.) Frequently the term "church" is taken in a more extensive sense, meaning all the Saints upon earth; as we pray in the litany "let us pray for the whole state of Christ's church militant here on earth," which is doubtless St. Paul's meaning in Acts xx. 28, including the catholic, or universal church, or all the christians in the world. This is in perfect harmony with the nineteenth article of the Church of England.

"The visible *church of Christ* is a congregation of faithful men, (or as the Latin translation of the thirty nine articles, published at the same time by authority, expresses it, "cœtus credentium," "a congregation of believers) in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered."—From all these authorities we may infer, that "the church of Christ" is a body of men among whom "there is one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and in all, and

through them all." (Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.) We hear nothing here of religious establishments." Why? Because the apostles and reformers thought there could be christian nations, without the union of civil and ecclesiastical power. Gold was not valued so highly by those "uneducated itinerant" Apostles, as it is by some of their "venerable successors."

I dare say that even the Doctor himself, in his cool and rational moments, would subscribe to the above account of "the church of Christ." But getting warm in his subject, and his imagination being considerably enflamed he slipt a little beyond the bounds of correctness, by gracing his subject with a few rhetorical embellishments.

It being obvious that there is nothing in our present "religious establishments," in the scripture accounts of the apostolic church; we will inquire a moment whether it is consistent with a truly apostolic church.

To silence every objection raised against a religious establishment, the Doctor triumphantly boasts that "the religious establishments of England and Scotland have been, under the divine blessing, the great promoters of all that is great and good in those happy countries" with respect to morality and literature, liberty, charity, &c.

The truth of this statement will be considered in another place; I shall now examine the principle.

Upon this I remark, that our Saviour never intimated the union of his church with the civil polity of any country. He refused to settle legal disputes, (Luke xii. 14.) He said that his "kingdom was not of this world," (John xviii. 36;) and consequently, that the policy by which his spiritual system is managed never ought to be blended with the imperfect works of men. Nor indeed can it be united with them without suffering material injury.

With respect to the support afforded to religion by the civil government, matter of fact proves that it can answer no beneficial purpose. The church of Christ never was so prosperous and so pure, as she was in the first three centuries. She was not only without the aid of the civil government, but was most violently opposed by it. Did this extirpate her from the earth or retard her progress? The former part of the Doctor's sermon abundantly proves that even "uneducated itinerant men, without human aid or influence, can in the strength of the Lord" "strew their way from country to country with the wrecks of Satan's Kingdom. Did not the religion of the Redeemer spread her victories with almost inconceivable rapidity against the united intrigue and force, of Jews, Greeks and Romans? Why is not "the manner of propagating the gospel, in the first days of its glory, the most judicious manner of propagating it now? Are her evidences less clear and forcible? Is her influence less upon the heart? If she, without civil support, nay, even opposed by the civil government, rose triumphant over the powers of earth and hell, and extended her influence so wide, that as Tertullian informs us, christians were in the forum, the senate, and in every place, except the theatre, why is her influence and extension now depending upon legislative influence? If there be any power in christianity, it operates on the *consciences* of men; resting solely on the belief of *invisible* realities. She can derive no weight or solemnity from human sanctions. "The kingdom of God" says Jesus "is within you," (Luke xvii. 21.) It is divested of that external pomp and splendor which are calculated to excite the admiration of the world; why then should a union with worldly men and worldly policy be considered essential to its diffusion and establishment? Is it not plain that whoever insists upon this heterogeneous union degrades the religion of Jesus, and displays an ignorance of its glorious power? Is

this not making christianity a pensioner upon political benevolence, rather than the "power of God unto salvation," [Rom. i. 16;] a tool of the state more than "a bright emanation from heaven?" No wonder then, that the power of religion, when clogged with the selfish contrivances of men, is always weakened. No wonder that those divines who are constantly dabbling in politics, are a disgrace to the church and a pestilence to their parishioners.

When was it that the church of Christ began to degenerate from her primitive purity? When religious establishments were first contemplated. When did popish and corrupt doctrines receive countenance and support in the church? When religious establishments commenced their existence. When did papal domination, which has crimsoned the christian world from age to age, commence her infernal sway? When religious establishments got the vogue.—When was the clergy corrupted by the emoluments of the church, so as to become dissolute in their lives, loose in their principles, and defective in their instructions; that the most superstitious and destructive errors became unchangeably established; that the *public creed* and *private sentiments* of her ministers widely differed; and that Sadducees found their way even into the pulpit? Let the faithful records of history declare it, to the everlasting disgrace of religious establishments. The Doctor attributes the superiority of intellectual improvement in England to her religious establishment. I feel no disposition to derogate from the luminaries of the Church of England that respect and praise, to which their superior talents and literary attainments give them an undisputed right. But let it also be remembered that learning and talents have shone with equal splendor among dissenters; and that the most illustrious literary characters, both in language and divinity, philosophy and the polite arts, which England can boast, rank themselves among dissenters. This shows that England might still "stand aloft like the sun in the heavens," without paying several hundred thousand pounds annually for the support of a religious establishment.

The Doctor considers a "religious establishment" the only means of supporting the clergy.

Were not the first ministers of Jesus Christ supported by the free-will offerings of christians? The Apostles had not found out the art of forcing men to support religion. This was left to the fertile genius of some of the "venerable" successors; and by them has been displayed to admirable advantage for many centuries. Yes, to such a degree of perfection has the system of *forcing* by the authority of legislative enactments, been brought, that A. B. being Rector of C. is allowed 1000*l.* per annum. Vicar of —, 600*l.* & Canon of E. 500*l.* per annum; F. G. being Bishop of L. & Dean of S. P. is allowed the very respectable income of 18, or 20,000*l.* per annum. No wonder that Diocesan Episcopacy and religious establishments are so highly valued, when they have made such great improvements on the imperfect system of christianity laid down by the apostles, whose views were so grovling that they did not seek a superb establishment to dwell in, but could even go "from country to country strewing their way with the wreck of Satan's Kingdom," "and having food and raiment, could therewith be content" [1 Tim. vi. 8] without having their fingers in politics, or a voice in the legislature. Their "venerable successors have become more wise, and have learned to take the world more easily and not preach Christ from house to house, in season and out of season, as the "uneducated itinerant" Apostles did. Many of their "venerable" successors have become so completely master of their profession, that they can spend two or three nights in a week at

the small table; one or two in the hall room, &c. &c. and there preach, by their pious example, the doctrine of christian purity. The Apostles never had the zeal to do this, though they sometimes preached Jesus in the streets, at the tribunal, and in prison.

So highly does the Doctor value religious establishments, that he is sure our neighbours in the United States do not feel the influence of religious instruction 'among the mass of their population.' I am no republican; but, I will take the liberty to observe that the United States without the assistance of a religious establishment, can produce men, who, for piety, learning and talents, both in the pulpit, in the closet, and in the senate, make a much more honorable display, than those who seem to despise them — I will just state the numbers of the different religious denominations in the neighboring States, and leave the reader to judge, how far the influence of religious instruction is felt among the 'mass of the population.'

'The principal religious denominations, at present in the United States, are the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, Baptists, Friends, Episcopalians, and Methodists. The two first of these united have more than twenty five hundred congregations; the number of the Baptist congregations, exceeds two thousand; the Friends have five hundred; and the Episcopalians about three hundred. The Methodists also are numerous.* [Hist. U. S. p. 393.]

I cannot but take notice of a circumstance in the Doctor's sermon, which though indifferent in itself, yet strongly bespeaks the narrowness of his religious feelings. Reluctantly conceding the 'praiseworthy exertions of a few religious denominations in the neighbouring States,' he observes, 'more especially the Episcopal Church,' which the historian informs us contains only three hundred congregations; and those we understand, are not in general, very conspicuous either for their religious zeal or piety.

The Doctor alleges, that 'without a liturgy, or regular form of prayer, no church can continue long.' [p 14.] This carries its own refutation.

He also says that 'the liturgy presents with great force, simplicity and beauty, the ways, means and appointments of God, to restore our fallen nature to purity and everlasting life, that it becomes a source of the liveliest devotion; by it the prejudices of men are removed, their minds enlightened and their hearts open to the reception of the Gospel.' [p. 14.] To all this pompous panegyric on the wonderful efficacy of the liturgy, I shall oppose the testimony of some of the most pious and learned ministers of the Church of England.

'During my whole life' he says 'I have heard of only three instances of persons converted to God, by attending to the service of the Church in places where the gospel has not been preached and I trust I should not exaggerate, were I to say that I have known *three thousand* in places where it has been preached. [Christ. Obs. p. 593, A. D. 1805.]

In p. 13, 14, the Doctor observes that 'while the members of other denominations, connected by no bond of union, by no consistent principles of order, and no subordination, are soon scattered and divided, our church proceeds with all the advantages, which union, discipline and order can produce. The people whom we address, are not bewildered with a variety of opinions.'

I scarcely know which to impeach, the Doctor's honesty, or his ignorance.— Who has not heard of the 'variety of opinions,' and the warm disputes that have divided the members and even ministers of the Church of England, at every period of her existence? If there be no 'variety of opinion' among the

* The Methodists consist of 224268 Members and 1200 Preachers.

members of the Church of England, whence originated the theological disputes between Mr. Simeon and Dr. Marsh, between the Christian Observers and the British Critics; between Dr. Hawker and Mr. [illegible]owes, between the Bishop of St. Davids and the Bishop of Llandaff; between the Evangelical Clergy and the High Churchmen, &c. &c.

Is it possible for a man of truth, and honesty, to make representations of this kind?

The Doctor then proceeds to detail the many and serious difficulties which opposed the first establishment, & which still prevents the extension of the Church of England in Canada. He describes in quite striking colours, the almost incredible ignorance, the mental degradation, the vitiated principles and practices, which abounded in the greatest part of the country at the time of his Lordship's first visit, and which now exist in many places. But he considers those obstacles which the "venerable Church" has to surmount, the greatest, which are occasioned by dissenters and sectaries. And here, as a hungry person did upon the poor man's beef, the Doctor makes a dead set upon the Methodists.

"Even when churches are erected," says the Doctor, "the persons who give regular attendance are so few, as greatly to discourage the minister, and his influence is frequently broken or injured by numbers of uneducated itinerant preachers, who, leaving their usual employment, betake themselves to preaching the gospel out of idleness, or a zeal without knowledge, by which they are induced without any preparation to teach what they do not know, and which from their pride they disdain to learn."

With respect to the small numbers who give regular attendance to the ministrations of the Church of England, I am of the Doctor's opinion. For I believe these instances are not very rare, which almost compel the venerable clergymen of Canada, to say with Dean Swift, "my dearly beloved Roger, the scripture moveth us in sundry places," &c. And as a remedy for this doleful complaint, we may say with the eloquent Chalmers, "to fill the Church well, we must fill the Pulpit well." Until that is done, the Doctor's mournful cries of Presbyterianism! Schism! Republicanism! will still be screeching in our ears; and the repose of the "Imperial Parliament" will continue to be disturbed by the desponding exclamations. "The Church is in danger—money! power!" Is there no deliverance from those endless qualms, with which the Doctor has for so many years been pained? Yes it is found in 2. Tim. iv. 2. "Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine."

As to the Doctor's remarks on the qualifications, motives, and conduct of the Methodist itinerant preachers they are ungenerous, unfounded and false.

The Methodist preachers do not value themselves upon the wealth, virtue or grandeur of their ancestry; nor do they consider their former occupation an argument against their present employment or usefulness. They have learned that the "venerable" Apostles, were once fishermen; that a Milner could once throw the shuttle; and that a Newton was not ashamed to watch his mother's flock. By these examples, and a hundred more, they feel themselves sufficiently shielded from the envious reflections of a bigoted ecclesiastic. They are likewise charged with "preaching the gospel out of idleness." Does the Doctor claim the attribute of omniscience? Does he know what is in man? How does he know they preach the gospel out of idleness? Let the Doctor remember that "with what judgment he judges, he shall be judged." [Matt. vii. 2.] What does the Doctor call idleness? Not the reading of one or two dry discourses every sabbath; not the preaching to one congregation, with an annual income of

£ or 300l. No; this is hard labour, this is indefatigable industry. Two or four hundred pounds per annum is no inducement, no motive for preaching the gospel. Those who labour in this apostolic manner, and for this small pittance, can not be otherwise than the "venerable successors" of the Apostles. Who are they then, that preach the gospel out of idleness? Those indolent covetous men who travel from two to three hundred miles and preach from twenty five to forty times every month. Those who in addition to this, visit from house to house, and teach young and old "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." [Acts xx. 21.] Those who continue this labour year after year, and are elevated with the enormous salary of 25 or 50l. per annum; these are the men who preach "the gospel out of idleness." O bigotry! thou parent of persecution; O envy! thou fountain of slander; O covetousness! thou god of injustice; would to heaven ye were banished from the earth!

The Methodist preachers are said to be uneducated, and to preach the gospel without any preparation. To a collegiate education they do not make pretensions. But it should not be forgotten that there are other ways and places of improvement, besides the Doctor's Academy at ——— and that if this objection may be brought against the Methodist preachers in Canada, it cannot be brought against those who composed their articles and discipline, and who formed their constitution. The founders of methodism, were not inferior to the most illustrious of their age, both in the republic of letters, and in scientific knowledge in general. But the Methodist preachers are not destitute of learning; nor do they undervalue it. They consider it indispensably necessary to an able minister of the gospel. They go further. They say "to human learning, we must add divine grace;" "that man is not properly qualified" say they, "who can only translate some of the classics, read a chapter or two of the Greek gospels, rehearse the Lord's prayer and the ten commandments in Latin, perhaps write a Latin sermon &c.—if he be destitute of that wisdom which comes down from heaven, "he cannot discern the things of the spirit of God," [1 Cor. ii. 14.] "Old things must pass away, and all things must become new," [2 Cor. v. 17.] St. Paul's learning, though extensive, did not qualify him for the ministry. "His sins must be washed away, and he be filled with the Holy Ghost," [Acts ix. 17.] The son of God was revealed in his heart, before he was qualified to preach him among the heathen. [Gal. i. 16.] Except a man be born not only of water, but of the spirit, he cannot see much less can he enter, and we add, much less is he qualified to preach the kingdom of God, [John iii. 3, 5.]—"Learning and piety" says an able divine "accompanied with a consciousness of the divine call, constitute the accomplished and able minister of Jesus Christ."

The Methodist Preachers consider a knowledge of the languages, both desirable and useful, and encourage the attainment of them, and allow to those who possess this knowledge all the superior advantages which it confers. But they do not think that what is commonly called *classical learning*, is essential to the minister of the Gospel. A few words excepted, it is quite needless to refer to the original languages in theological discussions, and on all those words and phrases, where the meaning is equivocal, or where a difference of opinion exists, all has been, that can with profit, be said. So generally is the learning of antiquity, and science in general, brought within the limits of our mother tongue, that we can attain a competent knowledge of all the sciences (excepting a few technical terms without knowing any other than the English language. It is so true in divinity, that we can say

many divines, who attach a great deal of sanctity and virtue to classical learning, no sooner pass the Bishop's hands, than they bid farewell to the ancient languages, and in a few years know as little about them (a few proverbial phrases excepted) as those who never learned them. Of what advantage is it to have known the good old way, and if after we have known it, we depart from the holy commandment delivered unto us?

But the Methodist church is not indifferent to the qualifications of her ministers. Whoever attends to the following rules given in the Methodist discipline, will see the wickedness, and falsehood of those vague assertions, that the Methodist preachers "are induced to preach what they do not know, and which from their pride they disdain to learn." With the following prior preparation every person must comply, before he can become a Minister of the Methodist church.

1. They are received as private members of society on trial.

2. After a half year, if they are found deserving, they are admitted as proper members.

3. When their grace and abilities are sufficiently manifest, they are appointed leaders of classes.

4. If they then discover talents for more important services, they are employed to exhort occasionally in the smaller congregations when the preachers cannot attend.

5. If approved of in this line of duty, they are allowed to preach.

6. Out of those men who are called local preachers, are selected the itinerant preachers, who are recommended by the conference of local preachers to the travelling conference; and if accepted, are appointed to a circuit.

7. Their characters and conduct are examined annually in the conference; and if they continue faithful for two years of trial, they are admitted into full connexion and ordained deacons; and if faithful two years longer, they are ordained elders or presbyters.

At these conferences, strict enquiry is made into the conduct and success of every preacher, and those who are found deficient in abilities are no longer employed as itinerants, while those whose conduct has not been agreeable to the Gospel are expelled, and are thereby deprived of all the privileges, even of private members of the society. [See Adam's Religious World Displayed, Vol. III., Coke's life of Wesley.]

Before persons are allowed to preach, after complying with the requisitions above laid down, the following questions are asked.

1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear sound understanding, a right judgment in the things of God, a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, and clearly?

3. Have they fruit; are any truly convinced of sin and converted to God by their preaching?

As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved by the Holy Ghost to preach. [Meth. Discipline, p. 44.]

When Methodist preachers are admitted to travel on trial in the manner already noticed, the following rule is given:—"It shall be the duty of the Bishop or of a Committee, whom he shall appoint at each annual conference, to point out a course of reading and study, proper to be pursued by candidates for the ministry; and the presiding elders, whenever such are presented to him, shall direct them to those studies, which

have been thus recommended. And before any such candidate is received into full connexion, he shall give a satisfactory evidence, respecting his knowledge of those particular subjects, which have been recommended to his consideration." [Discip. p. 38.] Accordingly; "The Committee of preachers appointed to arrange a plan or course of study for the candidates for admission into full connexion with the travelling preachers of the Methodist church in Canada, recommend the following course of study as indispensably necessary."

Theology.—Wesley's Sermons, Fletcher's Checks, Clarke and Bellamy's Commentaries.

Logic.—Watt's Logic.

Ecclesiastical History.—Mosheim's and Milner's Ecclesiastical Histories.

Grammar.—Murray's Grammar.

Geography.—Morse's Geography.

They further recommend the following studies as useful and ornamental: viz.

Natural Philosophy.—Wesley's Philosophy.

Ancient and Modern History.—Goldsmith's Rome, Greece, and England, Rollin's Ancient History, Prideaux, and Shuckford's Connections.

Poetry.—Milton's Paradise Lost, Young's Night Thoughts, and Cowper's Poems.

Biography.—The lives of Wesley, Fletcher, Coke, Bramwell, and Francis Xavier, British Nepos, &c.

Chronology.—Clark's Tables, contained in his Commentary.

The selection of authors on some branches, might perhaps have been more judicious; but do the above extracts show that the Methodist preachers "are induced without any preparation to preach what they do not know, and which from their pride they disdain to learn?"—The Methodist preachers are required to be diligent and studious, not only before they enter into full connexion, but during the whole course of their ministry. To such their discipline [p. 60] gives the following directions.—"Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly.

Steadily spend all the morning in this employment, or, at least five hours in four and twenty. And if any have not a taste for reading, let them acquire it or return to their former employment."

What are the public left to think of a man of God, a prop of the Church, who, surrounded by the sacred vestments of his ministry, with the word of truth before his eyes, and standing as an ambassador for Christ, will, when warned by all these solemnities, and in the face of the above evidence, pour forth slander as black as it is bitter? It is not impossible that the Methodist ministry, with all their imperfection and ignorance, may be almost as useful to the uncultivated inhabitants of Canada, as he who

"——————————stands fast wedged
Betwixt two empires, and with swollen cheeks
Inquires the news, his trumpet, keener far
Than all invective in its bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy; and defying shame,
Announces to the world his own, and theirs!
He teaches those to read whom schools dismiss'd
And colleges untaught; sells accent, tone,
And emphasis, in score, and gives to pray'r
The adagio and andante it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.
Are there who purchase of the doctor's wares?
O name it not in Gath! it cannot be
That grave and learned clerks should need such aid;
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
Assuming thus a rank unknown before,
Grand caterer and dry nurse of the church."

The Doctor having given this death blow to the Methodist preachers, continues several pages, developing the wretched state of morals, and the want of improvement in Canada; and the very serious impediments in the procuring of support, either from England or from the Legislature of these provinces. Also, that the want of labourers, and the scarcity of means induced the Bishop of Quebec to apply to the "society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts," to increase the number of their

millions." "His Lordship's request being favourably received" says the Doctor, "the next difficulty was to procure clergymen. For when they (the society) had recourse to the Bishop's prayer, in so far as they were able, clergymen of enlightened piety could not be found willing to leave England for Canada; that gentlemen of education and zeal refused to leave their homes, and the endearing associations, of early years, to come to so distant and inhospitable a colony."

If "gentlemen of enlightened piety and zeal would not sacrifice their homes and the endearing associations of early years" to preach the word of life to the uncultivated inhabitants of this colony, who would? Would those of less piety and less zeal do it? If this be the character of the "*gentlemen of enlightened piety and zeal*," what notions are we left to entertain of the great mass of the English clergy? Can these be the "sincere followers of the cross!" Can these be the true followers of him who declared with the most solemn asseverations, "if any man love father or mother, wife or children, houses or lands, more than me or my gospel, he cannot be my disciple?" [Luke, xiv. 26.]—Can these be the followers of him, who "counted all things but *dross* for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus?" [Phil. iii. 8.] Of him who was "willing not only to be found at Jerusalem, but to die for the Lord Jesus?" [Acts, xx. 13.] Can these gentlemen of *enlightened piety* and *zeal* be the "venerable" successors of him who "went from country to country strewing his way with the wrecks of Satan's kingdom?"

We would fain exculpate the enlightened and pious clergymen of England from that indelible reproach which the Doctor has poured upon them; but we fear the task would be too tedious at present. It seems, however, that tho' his Lordship could not find gentlemen of *enlightened piety* in England, he could find some in the sister kingdom, who could sacrifice nothing for "endearing associations of early years," but their own church, "to come out to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Hence though their *piety* might be *enlightened* against the "encroachment of enlightened piety and zeal" in England it could not be brought against those of Scotland.

The Doctor having shot his pointless darts at the sectaries of Canada, explained her "dreary wastes" and severely reproached the lukewarmness of the English clergy, commences hostilities with the Imperial parliament, against which he brandishes his little dagger with a great deal of vehemence and ability. However, it does not yet appear that he has cut his way to the inner chest; and as we think that the Imperial parliament are quite capable of defending themselves and taking care of their purse we shall not step forward in their defence.

The Doctor terminates his inspiring remarks on this heart rending subject, exclaims "what can fifty-three clergymen do, scattered over a country of greater extent than Great Britain?. Is it to be wondered at that under such circumstances, the religious benefits of the ecclesiastical establishment of England, are little known or felt, and that sectaries of all descriptions are increasing on every side? And when it is considered that the religious teachers of the other denominations, a very respectable portion of the ministers of the Church of Scotland excepted, come almost universally from the Republican States of America, where they gather their knowledge and form their sentiments, it is quite evident, that if the Imperial parliament does not immediately step forward with efficient help,"*

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* Is it not astonishing to hear such language in a country where three millions of acres are set apart for the support of fifty three clergymen, besides their proportion of near 10,000*l.* a year

the mass of the population will be surprised and instructed in hostility to our present obstacle, nor will it be long till they imbibe opinions any thing but favourable to the political institutions of England!" We are sorry to see the Doctor reduced to such a dilemma of opinion and distress; but we fear that his recovery will not be immediate. He cries in the language of despair "what can fifty-three clergymen do scattered over a country of greater extent than Great Britain?"—For the Doctor's relief and encouragement I would ask what did the twelve Apostles do in the midst of a benighted, a barbarous, and a persecuting world? What did a Waldus do in the valleys of Piedmont? What did a Wickliffe do in England? What did a Luther do in Germany; nay, in the christian world? What did a Wesley and his contemporaries do in Europe? What have the Methodists done in America?

The most of these were not endowed with miraculous gifts. Why did they not cry out in the tone of discouragement, "What can one man do in the face of an anti-christian world? Why did they not apply to some legislature for pecuniary aid? Because they had learned that "the race was not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," [Eccl. ix. 11.] Because they felt the force of that saying, "cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, whose heart departeth from the Lord," [Jer. xvii. 4.] Because they knew that the victories of the cross did not owe their extension to legislative influence or support. Because they believed the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, [2 Cor. x. 4.] Because they had "the sword of the spirit, which

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given for the support of the established faith in the Canadas by the British Parliament, and by the Society for propagating the Gospel in foreign parts?

divideth asunder the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, [Eph. vi. 17, Heb. iv. 12.] Because they were convinced "that the manner of propagating the gospel in the first days of its glory, must be the most judicious manner of propagating it now." And "according to their faith so it was done unto them," [Matt. ix. 29.] Let the "venerable" successors of the Apostles in Canada, go forward in the spirit of him whose residence was among the habitations of distress and the tabernacles of the poor; let them in reality, be the followers of them who "declared the whole counsel of God, in season and out of season, from house to house, reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all long suffering and doctrine," [Acts, xx. 27, 2 Tim. iv. 2.] And they will soon exclaim, not in the language of apology, but in the song of triumph "what have fifty-three clergymen done in the British Canadian Colony?" Would to God they might so do, and that every house might become a house of prayers, and every heart a temple of the Holy Ghost!

One particular reason, which the Doctor assigns for imploring the aid of the Imperial parliament is, that republican principles will be instilled into the minds of the people, by the "religious teachers of the other denominations, who" he says, "come *almost universally* from the Republican States of America."

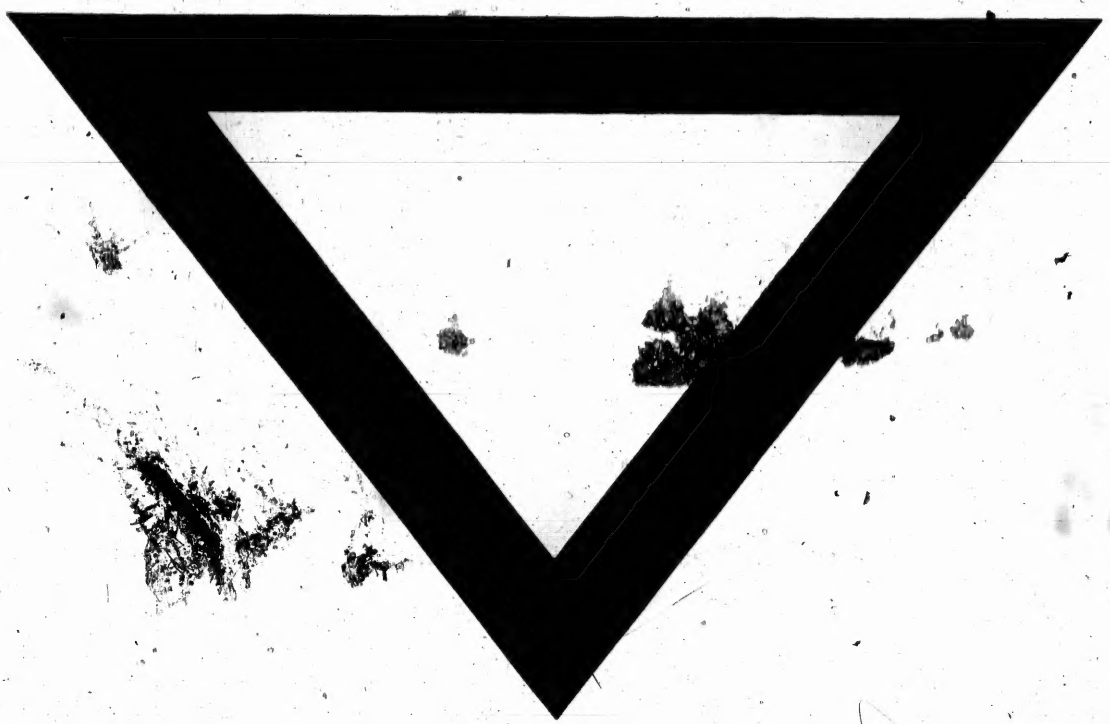
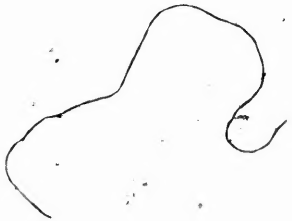
To put the Doctor at rest on this point, and to remove this cause of complaint, I remark, that the "religious teachers of the other denominations" do not talk or think quite so much about politics as the Doctor does. They have something else to do. They leave others to attend to temporal affairs, that they may "give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word," [Acts, vi. 4.] They find as much as they can do in hunting up "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," [Matt. xv. 24,] without having their fingers in every political

question that is agitated in the colony. They feel the force of that command, "give thyself *wholly* to them, study to show thyself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed," [1 Tim. iv. 15, 2 Tim. ii. 15.] They believe it to be their duty above all men to "have their conversation in heaven, [Phil. iii. 20.] And whatever might be their private feelings, they know that they have not come to canvass political questions, but to "call sinners to repentance," [Matt. ix. 13.]

But the assertion is false. They are not republicans; neither are they infected with republican principles; nor have they come "almost universally from the Republican States of America."

Seven eighths of the religious teachers among the dissenters, are British born subjects. And out of the whole body of the Methodist itinerant preachers, who seem to be the principal butt of the Doctor's hatred, there are only eight, who have not been *born and educated* in the British dominions. And of those eight all except two have become naturalized British subjects according to the statute of the province. Although such representations might have some palliation had they proceeded from a subtle lawyer, or a designing politician, yet, what covering can they have to conceal their deformity, when they drop from the lips of him, who proclaims them as he does, the solemn truths of heaven!

The hue-and-cry that "dissenters are disaffected to the Imperial Government," has stunned the ears of almost all Europe, for more than two centuries. It was first raised to make dissenters contribute to the support of the establishment, to enlarge the revenues of the clergy, and to give more unbounded sway to ecclesiastical domination; such as enforcing the act of uniformity &c.; and doubtless it is for the same purpose that it has been transported to America, and now continues its hideous clamour through the "dreary distance" of Canada.

Have the dissenters in this country ever shown a disposition in any way hostile to the true interests of the colony? Have they not been quiet in time of peace and bold in time of war? Answer ye parents, who mourn the loss of patriotic sons, who yielded up the ghost in the field of battle! Speak, ye fatherless children! the dying groans of whose dissenting fathers proclaimed, that "they could die in defence of the British constitution, and yet be unconnected with religious establishments! Bear testimony, ye disconsolate widows, whose dissenting husband's loyalty, has doomed you to perpetual melancholy! [illegible] up your voices, ye unfortunate [illegible], whose lacerated limbs speak more than volumes, that they are slanderers and liars, who say that the religious are more than the political dissenters in Canada, are not true to "the political institutions of England!"

I take my leave of the Doctor's sermon at present. He may trust in legislative influence; he may pray to the "Imperial Parliament." But we will trust in the Lord our God; and to Him will we make prayer. And, under his auspices, we fondly hope, that the day is not very far distant "when the banners of the Lamb will wave triumphantly over the blood stained car of the Juggernaut; when the Shaster and the Koran shall be exchanged for the oracles of truth;" when the plundering Arab, the degraded Hottentot, and the inflexible Chinese; with the polished European, and the uncultivated American, will sit down under the tree of life, and all acknowledge "one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one baptism, and one God."